An Essay
On
Measles,

Respectfully Submitted to the Faculty
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Measles.

There are many diseases to which the human organ-ization is liable which either from the rareness of their Symptoms or from their complication with other diseased functions escape that notice which their importance demands or by speedily progressing towards health fail to elicite a through examination; as an example of such disorders, I would call your attention to Measles.

This is a contagious eruptive fever, characterized by catarrhal Symptoms and a peculiar

eruption of the skin, which has a crecentic form, making its appearance generally on the fourth day of the disease, and about the eight day, the rash, fever and Catarrhal — Symptoms begin to decline together, but there are ex- -ceptions to this rule, the whole duration of the eruption in some cases does not ex- -ceed a day or two and in others is prolonged much beyond this period.

Measles in its simple form is not as a general rule, attended with much danger but runs its course mildly

and terminates in convalesence
in three or four days.
In the graver forms
however inflammations
and congestions sometimes
supervene soon after the
first attack; Sloughing,
gangrene and disorganization
of the throat and larynx
sometimes set in if not
properly treated.

In the Fall and Spring of
the year measles are more
prevelant than in the
Summer months.
It attacks children more
frequently than adults,
but none are positively

excluded from the disease.

The premonitory symptoms (which are not always present) are pains in the limbs and back, Chilliness and lassitude.

The febrile stage is ushered in by a frequent pulse furred tongue, anorexia, nausea and vomiting, hot dry skin with flushed face, and muscular weakness are frequent symptoms.

There are also other symptoms which characterize this disease, they proceed from irritation of the mucous membrane of the larynx, nostrils &c, such as profuse sneezing and coryza with

slight soreness of the throat huskiness of voice, a dry and hoarse cough and frequently constriction of the chest and dyspnoea.

In some cases there is hemorrhage from the nose and sometimes pains are experienced in the epigastric region accompanied with nausea and vomiting.

The bowels are most frequently constipated, but not necessarily so.

The eruption first presents itself in little red spots of a confluent nature, first upon the face and neck, then upon the body and

extremities.

There is often a space of two or three days between the occurance of the eruption on the upper extremities and its completion in the lower.

When at its height or frequently before that time it may be seen on the fauces having the same eruptive form which it has upon the skin and red points are not unfrequently observed to project above the fur on the tongue.

The fever and catarrhal symptoms do not always decline as a general rule when the eruption makes its appearance,

it seems sometimes as though they were increased instead of being lessened.

The eyes are frequently if not always very sensitive to the light and the patient is obliged to be kept in a dark room.

In true Measles when they are not complicated with other troubles and when the patient has had proper care during the attack; the rash, fever and catarrhal Symptoms begin to decline "together" about the eight-day of the disease or the fourth of the eruption.

The eruption in taking its departure follows the same course as it did in making its appearance, commencing on the face, neck, breast and upper extremities and proceeding downwards.

After the redness disappears the skin is of a dirty yellowish hue, and the cuticle seperates and is thrown off in scales.

As the fever and eruption decline the pectoral symptoms sometimes instead of diminishing as they generally do continue and become increased in severity and on auscultating the patient, we not unfrequently find

sings sufficient to prove to us, that there is extensive bronchitis or it may be that limited pneumonia has set in.

It not unfrequently happens that diarrhoea instead of bronchial or pulmonary inflammations set in and when it occurs in a mild degree is considered to be a favorable symptom, but sometimes it is not easily subdued and consequently becomes very troublesome.

Owing to internal irritation in different parts of the organism, the eruption may be greatly delayed in making its appearance, and after

it has appeared, may retrocede.
The retrocession is apt to be followed by alarming symptoms, such as convulsions, coma, dyspnoea, diarrhoea &c, the rash however may return with an abatement of these symptoms.

Measles sometimes appears of a malignant chancter, occasioned by a low or exhausted state of the system or a predisposition to the typhus condition.

Anatomical Characters.

It not unfrequently happens that no anatomical lesions can be found on a post mortem

examination, but sometimes however their may be detected inflammatory disorganization or congestion of one or more of the internal organs, and most frequently the mucose membranes.

It has been found by some observers that the fibrin is not above that of health, while the red corpuscles were found to be increased, which goes to prove that the affection is of a febrile character rather than as an inflammatory condition as some have supposed.

Cause. The cause of Measles is specific and by most people believed to be contagious.

Some persons catch this disease very readily when exposed to the contagion, while on the contary others seem to be insuseptible to it, and may be exposed with impunity.

Measles not unfrequently occur epidemically, Sometimes being confined to a small district at others involveing a large community, also occuring at times sporadically.

The cause has not always the same morbific influence but differs in different

epidemics, some being more sudden in their attack than others.

This disease seldom occurs more than but once in the same individual, except in some rare instances. Age is no absolute protection against this disease, but children are more liable to be attacked than adults.

It generally makes its appearance about a week after exposure, but not invariably so, it differs in different individuals according to their susceptability to the contagion.

Diagnosis. — In the early stage before the eruption (the ~~eruption~~) has made its appearance, Measles may be confounded with a variety of febrile diseases, whose initial stages are similar to each other, but after the appearance of the eruption, the only diseases with which it is liable to be confounded are small-pox — Scarlet fever and Roseola, but it is easily distinguished from the above complaints by its peculiar eruption which is of a semilunar form; also by the catarrhal symptoms.

Prognosis. — In Measles uncomplicated the prognosis

is generally favorable, but sometimes it happens that there is a good deal of inflammation of the lungs and bronchia therefore a guarded prognosis is always prudent.

If Measles are prevelant we may perhaps by the mildness or severity of the disease in general give a decided prognosis.

Some individuals or families have a peculiar predisposition to this disease in such it is more unfavorable than in others. In females during pregnancy the attack is also more severe.

Late appearance, difficult or sudden retrocession of the eruption are unfavorable symptoms also loss of the voice with dyspnoea, accompanied by a weak pulse, a livid colour of the rash and passive haemorrhage.

Treatment.— I now come to the treatment of Measles, commencing with naming the remedies which have been used in the different forms of this complaint, they are Aconitum, Pulsatilla, Bryonia, Belladona, Phosphorus, Nux Vomica, Ignatia, Mercurius, Causticum and Sulphur.

Aconitum - This remedy is indicated when the complaint is attended with fever of an inflammatory type, accompanied with dry heat of the skin and the patient complains of heat in the head with more or less confusion of that organ, he is unable to bear the light owing to the pain he experiences from it.

This remedy is found generally to be more or less useful throughout the complaint in alternation with others or as an intercurrent remedy.

Pulsatilla. - Is a powerful remedy and by some supposed to be a

Spefic in this disease, and is generally indicated in the beginning by the catarrhal symptoms which are one of the chief characteristics of this complaint, also from its being worse towards evening.

This remidy has been found very useful in bringing out the eruption when it is slow in making its appearance, it is also indicated when there is gastric trouble or when the cough which generally accompanies this disease is worse towards evening and attended with more or less mucose rhonchus accompinied with expectoration of a yellow or whitesh colour.

Bryonia - This is a very valuable remedy when the eruption is slow in making its appearance or faint and not well developed, also when the respiration is difficult and attended with pains in the limbs; accompanied with a dry cough, and the patient complains of shooting pains about the chest increased by a full inspiration.
Phosphorhus in alternation with this remedy has been found by some physicians to accomplish brilliant results especially if the eruption is tardy in making its appearance.

Belladonna would be indicated if the throat is attacked by inflammation, which is not unfrequently the case, the symptoms which would lead us to suspect that the throat had taken on inflammation would be a dry and burning sensation accompanied with a desire for drinks with great difficulty in swalling them, also when there is a hoarse, dry or as it sometimes happens a spasmodic cough which is worse at night accompanied with mucose rhonchus and when there is disturbance of the nervous system.

Of the remaining remedies which I spoke of as being useful in this disease little may be said concerning them, it is not always necessary to use them, and when they are indicated by the symptoms the physician ought to employ them.

9 Errors — Mostly in Spelling.